

Missouri Black Expo 2000

EPA Region 7

Environmental Justice Program

Outreach Activity

Facts About the Expo

The Missouri Black Expo (MBE) is the largest African-American community event in the region. The Expo annually attracts local minority, small, and corporate businesses; federal, state, and local agencies; and regional community and non-profit organizations, aiming for the attention of thousands of African-American consumers. The Missouri Black Expo has attracted as many as 70,000 people in previous years.

The Missouri Black Expo has maintained a spotlight for bringing in renowned speakers and entertainers to the event including 1999's Rhythm & Blues group, Ashford & Simpson and the Rev. Al Sharpton. This year D.L. Hughely, comedian and television star, appeared at MBE's American Family Insurance Benefit Gala; and religious and inspirational speaker, Juanita Bynum, appeared as a presenter on the, "2000 University of Missouri Lecture Series". In addition to the booth participants, speakers, and entertainment, the Expo also features self-improvement seminars and workshops designed to provide African-Americans with access to ideas and resources to aid in the quest for self-improvement and personal success.

Our Participation

The 9th annual Missouri Black Expo was held August 19-20, 2000, in St. Louis, MO. It included over 500 booth participants and attracted more than 30,000 attendees. The EPA participated again this year to provide education and outreach to the St. Louis community and beyond. Our theme for this year's display was "Hazardous Chemicals in your Community". Debbie Bishop and Kimberly Hill from the ECO / EJ Program partnered with Christine Hoard from the Chemical Risk Information Branch, Community Right-to-Know Program (ARTD) and Ken Rapplean from the



Enforcement Fund-Lead Removal Branch (SUPR). Some highlights of EPA's participation included the showcase of Superfund emergency response equipment such as the GEO PROBE, dive tank equipment, and protective gear. Also featured was an explanation of the hazard diamond, various chemical risk information, and EJ Program material.

The EPA Region 7 EJ Program has, in past years of attendance, coordinated outreach and education on children's health and environmental justice. Since the MBE, Kimberly Hill of the St. Louis Field Office has received five follow-up calls from around the area.



Our Experience

Our team felt successful because we were able to communicate EPA's program initiatives, while informing and educating a large number of people on various topics that directly affect the way they live in their communities. We were able to approach people and be approached in this setting because it was an open and free atmosphere where people did not feel overburden by educational material. We were able to reach out to children of all ages to ignite their interest in the EPA with the emergency response equipment that was displayed from Superfund. Overall, this event was a positive and successful one, hopefully we can continue to bring new programs to the Missouri Black Expo and expand our involvement in community outreach.

--- Debbie Bishop EPA Region 7 EJ Program